

Serial No. 984246

-2-

Art Unit 3505

Claims 1 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The language of claim 1 is vague eg. is the first and second inner and outer walls of the alignment means the same elements as the previously claimed first and second side walls of the wall means or are they different elements?

The "sidewalls" as set forth in line 21, is it those of the coupling or the elements?

The following phrases lack antecedent basis", the first and second ones", and "said first and second sidewalls" of said elements.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. § 103 which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Subject matter developed by another person, which qualifies as prior art only under subsection (f) or (g) of section 102 of this title, shall not preclude patentability under this section where the subject matter and the claimed invention were, at the time the invention was made, owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person.

Serial No. 984246

-3-

Art Unit 3505

Claims 1, 5 and 8 as understood are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Swifts in view of French pat. '341 to Baut.

Swifts Fig. 20 shows the claimed system with the exception of the clamp means. Baut shows a joint coupling comprising inner (14, 14) and outer (5) walls means (4, 6) and a biased spring (18) to enable automatic clamping of a coupled joint. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the coupling and interfitting walls (60) of Swifts to comprise a spring and means (4, 6) in lieu of the nut, bolts and openings to enable automatic clamping of the joints. Swifts fig. 18 shows a vertical to horizontal fitting comprising open vertical and horizontal access and slots at (58). The turned over flange of Swift's sidewalls (60) is considered to be an inner wall to the outer wall (60). Swift also comprise a first pocket on the right of the coupling and a second pocket on the left of the coupling.

Claims 6 and 7 are allowable over the prior art of record.

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Alvin Chin-Shue at telephone number (703) 308-2168.

Chin-Shue-CW
June 02, 1993



ALVIN C. CHIN-SHUE
PRIMARY EXAMINER
ART UNIT 355